



Over there...
The Brooklyn Papers / Greg Mango

Captain Robert Kohrs (far right) preps members of the Marines Sixth Communication Battalion at Fort Hamilton Saturday on all the paperwork that they will need to fill out before they are shipped off to the Persian Gulf.

W'front plan makes cut

Yassky: Despite budget deficit, mayor still behind Bridge Park

By Patrick Gallaue
The Brooklyn Papers

Brooklyn Bridge Park survived Mayor Michael Bloomberg's preliminary budget proposal this week. In a forum sponsored by the DUMBO Neighborhood Vinegar Hill and Fulton Ferry Landing associations at Bargemusic, docked at Fulton Ferry Landing, Councilman David Yassky announced that despite a grim fiscal picture, "We have some piece of good news."

Brooklyn Bridge Park — a 67-acre commercial and recreational development planned for the waterfront from Jay Street, under the Manhattan Bridge, 1.3 miles south to Joralemon Street — "wasn't touched," he said, despite a proposed slashing of the city's capital budget by 26 percent.

The city, which represents a total commitment of \$65 million towards the development, has allocated almost \$11 million towards Brooklyn Bridge Park in Fiscal Year 2003 for landscaping north of the Brooklyn Bridge around Main Street Park, at the intersection of Main and Plymouth streets.

The city is expected to build a pebble beach and develop more green space around the playground this year.

Yassky had expressed concern last October that the plan-ners were not moving quickly enough to use the funds while

the city was just looking for places from which to cut. The funding, however, will still be available in Fiscal Year 2004,

unless conditions change during negotiations between the City Council and Bloomberg to finalize a budget.

Prospect Parkers head to Albany



Prospect Park's Bailey Fountain, (seen above in 1932) is undergoing a \$1.5 million renovation. Reconstruction of the 70-year-old fountain should be completed by fall.

By Patrick Gallaue
The Brooklyn Papers

In a combination learning and lobbying expedition the Prospect Park Youth Council and Prospect Park Alliance Community Council went to Albany Jan. 21 for their fifth annual "Prospect Park Day" at the state Capitol.

"It's great, because the teenagers learn a lot about government and how it works," said Prospect Park Administrator Tupper Thomas, who is president of the alliance.

The alliance chartered buses for the trip from Park Slope and once in Albany the 25 teens split into groups to meet with different Brooklyn state Senate and Assembly legislators to make a Power Point presentation about what the youth council does and the role it plays in the community.

The youth council was founded in 1998, for young people between the ages of 14 and 21 to develop leadership skills, help maintain

See **ALBANY** on page 4

Brazen gunman holds up D'town

By Patrick Gallaue
The Brooklyn Papers

An armed robber fled into Long Island University's Downtown Brooklyn campus Tuesday afternoon, after holding up an armored car and robbing \$74,000 and firearms from two guards, delivering the cash to a campus ATM.

The melee emptied the campus and Flatbush Avenue was cordoned off for three hours, but the gunman managed to elude police and K-9 units.

According to police, at 10:30 am, two armed guards from New Jersey-based Shields Business Solutions entered the Metcalfe Building on the LIU campus, at the corner of Flatbush and DeKalb avenues, to fill an ATM machine. One of the guards had opened the ATM when he discovered his partner was being held at gunpoint.

The robber took the cash from the guards and also wrestled away their firearms, which consisted of a Heckler & Koch 40-caliber semiautomatic and a Springfield 357 Magnum. The bandit then fled up stairs and into the LIU building.

The perpetrator was described as a black male, about 6 feet tall and 160 pounds, dressed in a black, three-quarter-length bubble jacket.

Joyce Joseph, 19, a pharmacy major from Queens, was in the physics lab in the Metcalfe Building when she heard the fire alarm.

"We thought it was a joke," she said, before being told in the hallway to evacuate the building.

Whether it was school security or the thief who pulled the alarm to create a distraction was unclear.

Hundreds of students milled around outside the school while about 100 officers from the NYPD's Emergency Services Unit and the 84th and 88th precincts closed Flatbush Avenue to traffic and cordoned off the entire 10-acre campus.

Police dogs scoured the building top to bottom and officers extended the perimeter into the nearby Walt Whitman and Raymond Ingersoll housing complexes as well as the Fulton Mall.

The campus' five academic buildings are connected via third-floor bridges and can be difficult even for seasoned students to navigate, said Melanie Hill-Cantey, a coordinator in the student mentor program and an alumnus of the university.

Hill-Cantey said hiding out in the school would be more difficult than slipping out during the evacuation.

"The way they were evacu-

ating the building I felt was disorganized," she said. "I'm just thinking that he got out."

Bloodhounds and German shepherds swarmed the building as the rain thinned out the crowd that had gathered outside.

James Schinazi, 19, a pharmacy major from Midwood, waited in the rain, however, because his car was parked on one of the blocked-off streets. He had come outside to fill the meter when the building was evacuated forcing him to leave his books in the tutoring center.

"I got a double whammy," he said.

By around 2 pm, the police called off their search, and police department spokesman Capt. James Klein announced, "No one was found."

Car-jacking

Shortly before police called off their search around LIU, a car was stolen at gunpoint from a Brooklyn Hospital parking lot on Ashland Place, between DeKalb Avenue and Willoughby Street.

An employee of the garage, his books in the tutoring center.

See **HEIST** on page 3

Witnesses eye new Jay St. site

By Patrick Gallaue
The Brooklyn Papers

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, better known as the Jehovah's Witnesses, is circulating plans to develop a parking lot at 85 Jay St. in DUMBO.

The three-acre parcel — bounded by Jay, Front, Bridge and York streets, half a block from the Manhattan Bridge overpass — was purchased by the Watchtower Society in the early 1990s, and is slated for residential housing for the religious group's members.

Keith Cady, the Watchtower Society's project coordinator for the 85 Jay St. site, said the proposal is currently being discussed with the Department of City Planning but has not yet been certified to begin its passage through the city's Land Use Review Procedure (LURP), a public

review required to rezone the parcel from light manufacturing to residential.

"We are just going through the process with the Department of City Planning in Brooklyn and in Manhattan to basically see how this project could develop from their point of view," Cady said.

The three-acre parcel — the Manhattan-based architectural firm behind the Mark Morris Dance Center in Fort Greene, among other projects, has been hired to create the design of the building but formal details, such as height, materials and renderings, are not yet available, according to Cady.

"The comments we have received from the community board, from neighborhood groups and from City Planning is that they would like to see it developed in a way that is contextual with the light manufacturing buildings that are

See **WITNESS** on page 4

POST NO BILL

DeBlasio won't put name to gay measure

By Patrick Gallaue
The Brooklyn Papers

Councilman Bill DeBlasio's decision not to co-sponsor a bill extending employment benefits to domestic partners has gay rights groups claiming the Park Slope official's ambitions are overshadowing his campaign promises.

Island's Michael McMahon.

The legislation would require an entity contracting with the city to provide benefits to domestic partners registered with the city, or partners of a civil union recognized by another jurisdiction. The legislation is currently circulating in the council to collect enough sponsors to ensure it could withstand a mayoral veto.

DeBlasio, who has been one of the more progressive voices in the council, and who still claims to be an advocate of the bill, has asked that it be amended to exempt religious institutions. That has aroused some suspicion that he is bending to pressure from Assemblyman Dov Hikind, whose largely Orthodox Jewish 48th Assembly District of Borough Park dovetails with DeBlasio's 39th Council District, which also includes Carroll Gardens and Park Slope.

"This is clearly not the last job Bill DeBlasio's going to have and he's looking down the line and thinking he will need Dov Hikind's support," said Dan Tietz, president of the Lambda Independent Democrats (LID), a Brownstone Brooklyn-based gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender political club.

DeBlasio, who served as

See **DEBLASIO** on page 4

Bank rob arrest

By Patrick Gallaue
The Brooklyn Papers

A suspect in at least two Fort Greene bank robberies, who may be connected to a slew of Brooklyn Heights and Downtown Brooklyn robberies, was arrested this week in Plainfield, N.J.

According to police, the suspect, Richard Johnson, 47, a homeless man, was wanted in more than a dozen bank robberies in Brooklyn, Queens and New Jersey.

Police said that while he confessed to those robberies, eight of which were

in Brooklyn, they will continue to investigate whether there is a possible link to other, similar bank robberies in Downtown Brooklyn Heights in recent weeks.

"We're in the process of reviewing every one in the 84th [Precinct] to see if there are possible links to this individual," said Inspector Christopher Rising, commanding officer of the precinct, which covers Downtown Brooklyn, Brooklyn Heights, DUMBO and Boerum Hill. "But as of right now, none of them have been linked."

See **ROBBERIES** on page 3



Shuttle disaster recalls Christa Dyker School named for teacher-astronaut holds moment of silence

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

While investigators pieced together clues from Saturday's Columbia space shuttle disaster, children returned to school on Monday with a shaken sense of security.

At Intermediate School 187 in Dyker Heights, the Christa McAuliffe School, the crash had a particular sting.

The public school, on 65th Street at 11th Avenue, is named for the school teacher and astronaut killed when the space shuttle Challenger exploded just 73 seconds after it took off on Jan. 28, 1986.

The green marquis outside the school reads, "Home of the Explorer" and the flag flying at half-mast Monday was a constant reminder of the weekend's tragedy.

Inside the school, McAuliffe is featured in a new mural that students put up recently. Depicted in her blue NASA uniform she stands alongside the ill-fated Challenger. She is featured, pensively, against the planetary system she dreamed of visiting.

Because none of the students at the Christa McAuliffe



The space shuttle Columbia (top) breaks up over Texas Saturday. (Above) Teacher and citizen astronaut, Christa McAuliffe, who died in the Challenger tragedy in 1986, with her children during a parade in Concord, N.H., in 1985. A Dyker Heights school is named for her.

Associated Press

See **CHRISTA** on page 6

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New look, old lines at Cadman's GPO

By Beverley Wang
The Brooklyn Papers

Yet another example that you can't have your cake and eat it, too: customers at the newly renovated General Post Office on Cadman Plaza this week complimented the sparkling new interior of the facility

but complained waits were longer than ever.

Number four in a line of about 30 customers stretching past the security sensors, Nicola Gambino, a credit manager, praised the new post office's easier to understand signage and new security windows. "It's beautiful," he said, "but

the service is lousy."

Gambino, 39, said he had been waiting "at least 20 minutes" to buy stamps with his credit card. Postage stamp vending machines at the entrance to the post office only accept cash, so customers seeking to pay by credit or debit card last Friday afternoon had no choice but to step

into an already bloated line.

The refurbished Cadman Plaza entrance to the General Post Office (GPO) opened the second week of January. Before then, customers had been diverted to an entrance on Johnson Street ever since construction began in 1999.

Checkerboard flooring and wood-framed display windows are some details that retain the flavor of the building's heritage. Linda Peters, a project executive with the Brooklyn Court Project for the city General Services Administration said that in the process of moving the GPO from one side of the building to the other, a new mezzanine was built to serve as the base for Downtown Brooklyn mail carriers. The bill for renovating both wings of the former courthouse, which date from 1892 and 1933, is "approximately \$130 million," said Peters.

For customers, new additions like fresh tiles, bright lighting, electronic service windows and bulletproof glass are vast improvements on the old post office, which Gambino described as "a lot more decrepit, a lot more decrepit compared to this one."

Still, many customers did not perceive an improvement in their main concern — service.

A few steps behind Gambino, Pat Skelton, in a blue handbag, waited to ship back two Time Life CDs. Skelton, an engineer working on the Brooklyn Court Project, said of the new electronic call system for service windows, "It takes like five, 10 minutes longer."

"I like the design, I just don't like the wait. It should be much quicker," said Skelton, who stopped into the post office on his lunch break.

Pat Bellantoni, a spokesman for the Brooklyn Post Office, said, "It's the same stuff as we had before and the wait on line depends on the amount of traffic at a given time. Some [lines] are quick and some are slow, it depends on the time of day like anything else."

But one longtime customer gave high marks to the look and feel of the new post office. On her first visit to the renovated premises, Bertha Lowitt, who looks two decades younger than her 85 years, struggled to slide a puffy envelope between the thick double layer of bulletproof glass separating workers and customers. But the retired schoolteacher had only positive comments about the changes.

Said Lowitt, who mailed books and dolls to great grandnephews in East Charlesberg, Penn.: "(Customers) just used to slam [packages] down on the long table. They were open. This is kind of nice." Lowitt, who even had kind words for the "lovely" postal workers, added, "Compared to what it was like, it's very lovely."

Joan delivers mail to Gardens seniors



Customers Mary Churak, Larry DiFasani, Agnes Caminiti, Salvatore Noto, (from left) with post office employees Max Minavro, Aldo Matteucci, Michael Flemming and Lisa Gayle at the new two-day-a-week postal center at the Eileen Dugan Senior Center on Court Street and First Place in Carroll Gardens.

The Brooklyn Papers / Tom Callan

By Patrick Gallahue
The Brooklyn Papers

The U.S. Postal Service has set up a two-day-a-week Post Office in the Eileen Dugan Senior Center on Court Street between First Place and President Street.

"They finally listened after saying the seniors in Carroll Gardens are underserved,"

said Assemblywoman Joan Millman who has pushed Postmaster General John Potter to open a permanent facility in Carroll Gardens.

The service is open to seniors on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 11 am to 1 pm. Patrons do not have to be members of the center but they must be senior citizens and identification may be requested.

The neighborhoods of Carroll Gardens and Cobble Hill

have bemoaned the absence of a community post office since a postal contract station located inside the Carroll Court Pharmacy, at 388 Court St., was taken out of service two years ago by the drugstore's owner.

The Postal Service has provided a mobile post office to the neighborhood on Court Street, between First Place and Carroll Street, Monday through Friday, 10:15 am to 4 pm, but its presence has been inconsistent because it frequently parks at different locations and closes for meals.

Millman said that Carroll Gardens' population currently stands at about 30,000 residents, 15 percent of which are senior citizens, making the long journey to the Red Hook or Brooklyn Heights post offices particularly grievous.

The new senior center service will sell stamps and money orders and will also accept packages.

"What we have to do as a senior center is use it," Millman said. "And prove there is a need."

The 20-year-old center, named after the late Brooklyn Heights and Carroll Gardens assemblywoman, serves about 120 seniors a day with meals, and activities such as exercise, games and dance classes.

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84th cop honors Columbia

By Patrick Gallahee
The Brooklyn Papers

An 84th Precinct cop, Police Officer David Jackson, was selected to stand by President George Bush in Houston during a ceremony at the Johnson Space Center Tuesday to memorialize the seven astronauts of the space shuttle Columbia.

"He's the only representative of the NYPD," said Inspector Christopher Rising, commanding officer of the 84th Precinct, which covers Brooklyn Heights, Downtown Brooklyn, DUMBO and Boerum Hill. "So it was a great honor for him and for us."

Rising was notified of Jackson's selection on Monday af-



Officer David Jackson

termoon and was asked if the recently honored precinct Cop of the Year could board a plane for Houston that night. Jackson accepted the invitation and flew out, set to return Tuesday night.

"He wanted to send someone from the rank and file and someone who represents the best in our department," Rising said.

ing said of Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly's decision. "And Dave Jackson fit that description."

"Their mission was almost completed and we lost them so close to home," Bush told the thousands, including Jackson, gathered at the Johnson Space Center Tuesday. The president vowed that space exploration would go on.

Last month, Jackson was selected by the precinct and the 84th Precinct Community Council as top cop for 2002.

Jackson, 42, has been an officer in the 84th Precinct since 1990, working the midnight to 8 a.m. shift for the past 12 years.

"Working those hours he often goes unnoticed by community members and supervisors," Leslie Lewis, president

of the precinct council, said during the Cop of the Year ceremony. "However, the truth of the matter is, he is an unsung hero and one of the most vital members of this command."

Jackson's recognition by the community, however, was an important part of his selection to represent all New York police officers at the memorial service in Houston, Rising said.

"Dave Jackson was our Cop of the Year and the police commissioner was aware of it," Rising said.

Soft-spoken and modest, Jackson holds a degree in geology from Adelphi University and lives on Long Island, with his wife of 10 years, Cynthia, and their two children.

Bank bandit gets \$3G

By Patrick Gallahee
The Brooklyn Papers

The M & T bank on Flatbush Avenue, between Sterling Street and St. John's Place in Park Slope, was held up by a gun-toting bandit on Jan. 31.

According to police, the suspect entered the bank shortly before 1 p.m. and handed the teller a note demanding cash. The stick-up man also allegedly reached into his jacket and flashed a black handgun. The teller handed the robber \$3,000 and a dye pack and the crook took off. No arrests have been made and the investigation is ongoing.

Police Blotters

Heights burgle

A home on Henry Street between State Street and Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn Heights, was burglarized Jan. 29 of change, a watch and a telephone.

The home's residents, 24 and 28 years old, left the apartment at 11 a.m. and a neighbor discovered the front door forced open shortly after 4 p.m. The roommates told police that the burglar stole \$5 in coins, a watch reportedly valued at \$80 and their telephone.

Grocery nab

Officers from the 76th Precinct captured a suspected burglar wanted for a bungled break-in at a Key Food supermarket on Court Street between First and Second places in Carroll Gardens.

Detective Edwin Cesario and Police Officer Nancy Meischner, were on patrol at around 9:30 a.m. on Feb. 4 when they spotted a man they recognized from the store's surveillance

tape. The suspect, 39, was coincidentally standing only about 200 feet from the store he had allegedly tried to burglarize.

According to police, the man broke into the Key Food at 1 a.m. on Jan. 13 by prying open a side door. Triflino allegedly made fruitless attempts to break open the store's safe and then finally gave up and left without taking anything.

Parting gifts

Party animals Winona's a hostess' property during a shindig in her home on Garfield Place between Eighth Avenue and Prospect Park West.

The victim told police that sometime between 7:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. on Jan. 31, while she was entertaining, someone stole her Palm Pilot, passport, Social Security card and credit cards.

Bust mugger

A 44-year-old man was held up by an inquisitive thief while taking money out of an ATM machine.

The victim was taking money out of the ATM at a grocery store on Eighth Avenue between Fifth and Sixth streets in Park Slope, around 6 p.m. on Jan. 30, when the mugger walked up with his hand tucked in his jacket as if he were armed.

"Do you know what this is?" the mugger asked, apparently referring to his possible concealed weapon.

The victim withdrew \$50 and handed it to the thief, but the mugger was not satisfied. "Give me more," the suspect allegedly ordered.

The victim withdrew another \$50 and handed it to the suspect who then took off on Eighth Street, but police officers caught up to him on Prospect Park West at First Street and charged him with robbery.

HEIST

Continued from page 1

said the crook marched into the lot and attempted to get into a gray 2002 Lexus. The attendant asked the car-jacker what he wanted, knowing that the car did not belong to him. The thief responded that it was his mother's car. Patrons of the garage are asked to leave their keys in the ignition.

When the attendant attempted to stop him, the car-jacker pulled a gun and sped off onto Ashland Place. The garage employees and one of his colleagues chased the car, and when it came to the intersection of DeKalb Avenue and Ashland Place, the driver took a shortcut through Brooklyn Hospital's ambulance bay onto St. Felix Street.

Shortly after the car-jacking police said they were looking into a possible connection to the LIU hold-up, but police said on Wednesday that they apprehended a suspect in the car theft and that it was unrelated.

Police said the stolen Lexus was equipped with a tracking device and a suspect from Bedford-Stuyvesant, was seen getting into the parked car. Police said that the suspect did not fit the description of the LIU bandit.

ROBBERS...

Continued from page 1

Among those the suspect has been linked to in Fort Greene are two at an HSBC Bank at 1 Hanson Pl., between Ashland Place and St. Felix Street, on Nov. 28 and Dec. 27.

Other Brooklyn bank robberies police believe were committed by Johnson occurred in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Flatlands, East Flatbush and East New York, between Nov. 20 and Jan. 4.

Johnson was arrested outside a check-cashing business in Plainfield, where he reportedly cashed his weekly unemployment checks. Published reports said Johnson has a lengthy criminal record dating back to 1974, that he is addicted to heroin and that he has served time in prison.

In the past three months, at least seven banks have been robbed in Downtown Brooklyn and Brooklyn Heights by a note-passing man who seemed to flee at the slightest hesitation. On Jan. 18, at around 10 a.m., the Independence Community Bank on Montague Street, between Clinton and Court streets, was robbed of \$3,000. The bandit handed the teller a yellow envelope and then said, "Give me the money."

That incident was preceded by about half a dozen robberies, occasionally two committed in a day, which is consistent with what police say was Johnson's modus operandi during the spree.

On Dec. 2, a stickup man robbed a Chase bank on Flatbush Avenue at Nevins Street of \$400. Ten minutes later, a Chase bank on Montague Street, between Clinton and Court streets, was nearly robbed after a thug handed the teller a note demanding money but then fled without taking anything.

On Dec. 12, a man entered a Citibank, next door to the Inde-

pendence Community Bank, and passed the teller a note that read: "Pass the money, I have a gun." The teller pressed the silent alarm and the suspect fled without taking any money.

On Dec. 16, an HSBC Bank, on the same block of Montague Street, was robbed of more than \$4,000. That was the only incident in which a perpetrator displayed a gun.

On Dec. 26, another HSBC Bank, on Fulton Street at Red Hook Lane, was robbed of an undisclosed amount of cash. The next day, Johnson allegedly robbed the HSBC on Hanson Place.

In all the incidents, the perpetrator was described as black male, although ages vary from 26 to 50.

Johnson made off with an average of \$3,000 in each robbery, according to police. The Union County DA's office in New Jersey did not return calls asking if Johnson would face extradition to New York. The city Department of Corrections and the Brooklyn DA's office did not have any record of Johnson as of press time.

Getting it right...

The article headlined "DEMBRO's a furniture destination" (The Brooklyn Papers, Jan. 20, 2003) misidentified the owner of the Level Collective shop at 45 Main St. The owner's name is Jim Hill. We regret the error.


The Brooklyn Papers strives for accuracy, but sometimes mistakes are made. In such cases, readers are urged to contact Managing Editor Neil Silane at (718) 834-9350, ext. 119, or by fax at (718) 834-9278.

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Most of the operating costs for Prospect Park are provided by the city, therefore recent cuts to the park's maintenance budget were not issues on the agenda.

The community committee, comprised of representatives from park-related organizations, and the youth council members met with almost all of the Brooklyn delegation in the state Legislature, including state Sen. Seymour Lachman (Sunset Park-Staten Island), Velmañette Montgomery (Downtown Brooklyn-Fort Greene), Carl Andrews (Park Slope-Windsor Terrace), and Assembly members Jim Brennan (Park Slope), Roger Green (Park Slope-John Jay), Joseph L. Bruno (Brooklyn Heights) and Joseph Lentol (Williamsburg-Fort Greene).

"They certainly made an impression on me," Millman said.

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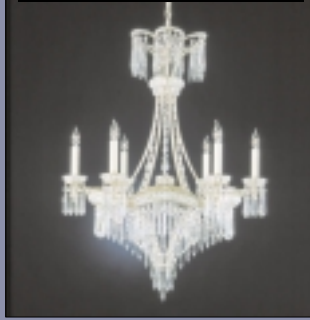
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Bensonhurst student an Intel finalist

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

Anna Gekker doesn't sound like your typical 17-year-old.

She tosses around phrases like "statistical analysis" and "linear regression models" with the same ease most teenagers talk about Big Macs and the latest J-Lo ditty.

While she is also on the tennis and math teams at Brooklyn Technical High School, Gekker has devoted the past year and a half to studying the effects of social interactions on the recovery time of rehabilitation patients.

It is that research, conducted at a center in Brighton Beach — not too far from her home in Bensonhurst — that landed Gekker one of the 40 nationally coveted finalist slots in the Intel Science Talent Search.

In addition to receiving a \$5,000 scholarship and a new computer, Gekker, who was selected from among thousands of high school students nationwide, will go on to compete for the \$100,000 top prize in Washington, D.C., on March 6.

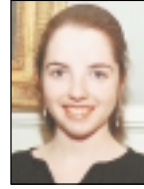
"I was so excited. I didn't expect it," said Gekker, who met Mayor Michael Bloomberg at City Hall a couple of weeks ago when he congratulated the 59 semifinalists from New York City. Of those, only five were selected as finalists.

Born in Moldova, Gekker moved to the United States in 1991 with her parents, who wanted to escape anti-Semitism and give their daughter opportunities she might not have otherwise had.

"I was always interested in medicine," explained Gekker, whose mother is a doctor with a private practice in Brooklyn. "It started when I was volunteering at Coney Island Hospital and I noticed that with the West Nile virus that some people recovered while others didn't. I then looked at their age, gender, and other psychosocial factors," Gekker said.

In her own research in Brighton Beach, Gekker analyzed more than 1,700 patient records and through statistical analysis found that if a patient received a visitor for an hour each day his stay would be reduced on average by 3.6 days.

"It's extremely exciting to see a student who has worked so hard have her paper recognized," said Beth Malchiodi, Gekker's advisor at Brooklyn



Anna Gekker BP/Tom Galan

Tech, who spent countless hours working with her.

Malchiodi teaches a social science research class to juniors in the social science major at the school. Each year, a small group of students are chosen from that class to continue their research. Those students meet with Malchiodi for a double-period, extracurricular class every day, often staying even later.

"Because it's the last class of the day, they tend not to go home," said Malchiodi, who noted that students had occasionally stayed in the computer lab until 10 pm.

Even with a master's degree in anthropology, Malchiodi said the students sometimes surpass her knowledge of a certain topic. "And that's the goal," she said.

Gekker was directed to a statistician at the University of North Carolina, a friend of Malchiodi's from graduate school, for help with linear regression models.

Tom between majoring in social science and the hard sciences, Gekker went for the former because, she said, it let her "get a taste of everything."

"Science has the ability to change the world," Gekker said. "It's not the power of the presidency. It's a different kind of power."

An avid ballroom dancer who recently converted to salsa dancing, Gekker will be attending New York University in the fall and hopes to follow in her mother's footsteps and become a doctor.

In the meantime, she is busy preparing for her weeklong venture to the Capitol and the rounds of interviews and presentations she will have to make. Saturday at the school, she explains, "I already know the material so well."

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CHRISTA...

Continued from page 1

file School were yet born when the school teacher from Concord, N.H., and her six crewmates, died in an explosion caused by a fuel leak in one of the Challenger's solid rocket boosters, Saturday's Columbia shuttle tragedy brought a terrible sense of reality to a story they had only read in textbooks.

Monday morning, students gathered in assembly and offered a moment of silence to honor the seven dead Columbia crew members: Mission Commander Col. Rick Husband, Lt. Col. Michael Anderson, Commander William McCool, Capt. David Brown, Commander Laurel Salton Clark, scientist Kalpana Chawla and Col. Ian Ransom, the first Israeli to venture into space.

"Horror brings questions," said Tina Candela, a parent waiting outside IS 187 to pick up her son Dylan, 14.

"He asks a whole lot of questions now, like 'Why would people knowingly risk their lives?'" Candela said. But as a mother, she explains to Dylan that "people will do anything to obtain their dreams."

"One day, when he gets older, he'll understand that," she added.

As students filed out of school on Monday, most said they had not really talked about the space shuttle that much.

When asked if they wanted to travel into space, one sixth grader replied, "No way," while her friend Kaitlin Montijo, 11, said it depended on what advancements have been made by the time she is old enough to go.

Linda Smith, a school aide at the McAuliffe school, said she couldn't believe it when she and her husband heard the radio reports on Saturday morning.

"It felt like we were watching it all over again," Smith said, explaining that she had also been eating breakfast with her husband 17 years ago when the Challenger disintegrated.

"I didn't think something like that could happen with all our technology," said Christine, a 13-year-old student at Regina Pacts, a Catholic school across the street from IS 187. "I was just totally surprised."

Administrators at the Christa McAuliffe School said they were planning a special forum to address the tragedy sometime next week.

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DINING

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More changes on Smith Street

THEATER

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New theater opens in Williamsburg

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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

(718) 834-9350 • February 10, 2003

Food = love

Cupid's arrow points to these prix fixe menus for a sensuous Valentine's Day

By Tina Barry
for The Brooklyn Papers

"Tell me about your first date with dad," my daughter asked recently. "Well," I began, "we met in front of Cafe Figaro in the Village." I then described our evening — mouthful by mouthful: the omelet at Elephant & Castle oozing with goat cheese; glasses of chardonnay at a wine bar later in the evening; warm apple crumb pie with vanilla ice cream that we shared early that morning in a romantic little dessert place a few blocks from the bar.

She stared at me with undisguised preteen disgust. "I wanted to know what you wore; what you talked about; if you kissed," she said. "Not what you ate!"

"Oh. That I don't remember," I confessed.

I didn't bother to explain that for me the sign of a successful date, or any other occasion, is remembering the food. "What about Valentine's days? Did you have romantic times together?" she wondered. How do I tell a kid who still believes in love at first sight, puffy white wedding dresses and two children — first a boy, then a girl — that this made-up holiday is as much about celebrating the pleasures of love as it is about enduring it?

"We're having a romantic evening together this year," I assured her. "Good," she said. "When you come back you can tell me everything about it, except the food. Please, don't tell me anything about the food."

Below are a few restaurants whose chefs' know what a great meal can do for romance. Chef William Snell of **Cocotte**, the popular country French restaurant in Park Slope, is offering a special, three-course, prix fixe menu for \$65. The restaurant — all dark wood and candlelight — is the perfect spot for a romantic twosome.



Warm the heart: (Top) At Alliloi in Williamsburg, the menu encourages diners to take the time to feed each other. (Left) At Providence En Boite in Bay Ridge, the display of Valentine's sweets are a feast for all the senses. (Inset) At Patisserie on Smith Street, the chocolate-dipped strawberries are a tempting attraction.

The Brooklyn Papers' Greg Marigo

Start your meal with truffle-marinated, wild-mushroom bisque, house-made foie gras terrine or prosciutto-wrapped tuna. Entrees include roasted quail served in light cream and sautéed cherry sauce; a goat cheese-crusted rack of lamb with butternut squash gnocchi; and the spicy "lovers' quarrel" lobster served with creamy polenta and a warm corn relish. For dessert, indulge in a lemon soufflé, chocolate cream puffs filled with custard or "sinful" flourless chocolate cake.

Convivium Osteria on Park Slope's Fifth Avenue is a special restaurant. The Mediterranean cooking of chef Carlo Pulixi, has won accolades from local patrons, and has become a destination stop for diners from distant neighborhoods. The dining room is charming with ocher-toned walls, round-brown tables and candle-encased wall scones casting a flattering glow over diners. In addition to the

restaurant's standard entrees, Pulixi has created a \$45 prix fixe menu for the special evening. The meal begins with an appetizer of scallops "Viennas" style — pan seared with prosciutto and tomato. A pasta course of ravioli stuffed with capon and porcini mushrooms follows. The fish course is flounder with lemon and white wine sauce, then a meat course that features roasted saddle of venison paired with a blueberry and pumpkin puree. The meal concludes with a rich, flourless chocolate tart scattered with berries and a glass of muscatel wine.

What could be more romantic than dining in front of a roaring fireplace? Executive chef Charles Statman of **Patisserie** — a cozy French restaurant that began Smith Street's restaurant renaissance — has added a number of special Valentine's Day dishes to his menu.

Four appetizers are offered to begin the dinner: a trio of fresh oysters with a red wine Mignonette or spicy jalapeno relish; a shrimp scampi with fried capers; a refreshing salad of roasted organic beets with goat cheese; or a luscious smoked Portobello and foie gras terrine served with a mustard seed and quince chutney.

Lusty main courses include filet mignon with béarnaise sauce served with garlic-mashed potatoes and broccoli rabe; and a poached Arctic char paired with French lentils and wild mushrooms; and a poached Maine lobster and scallops served with snow peas and red peppers in a sweet wine sauce.

At Patisserie, vegetarians can feast on fettuccine with mushrooms and truffles tossed in a chive-accented cream sauce.

See V-DAY on page GO 4

DINING AROUND BROOKLYN

Alicia's Cafe & Eatery

10 Columbia Pl. at Joralemon Street, (718) 532-0069 (Vias, MC, Discover) Entrees: \$7-\$10

Alicia's, which calls itself "American eclectic," serves a grilled salmon with garlic mashed potatoes that makes the fish new again. It's a comfortable place off the beaten track, with the culinary comfort of home. The casual setting, with prices that max out at \$10. (That is not a misprint.) For a walk-up call, try the grilled shrimp appetizer, five tender shrimp that retain that hot-off-the-grill taste, enhanced by the freshness of lime, and topped with a light wine and parsley sauce. For dessert, a bowl of soupy rice pudding comes topped with a dollop of pineapple custard, and a portion of loosely whipped cream — ah, different house-made ice creams are served each evening. The strawberry Infante and chocolate with sour cherries sound like winners.

Alliloi

291 Grand St. between Havermyer and Rocking streets, (718) 218-7338 (Vias, MC)

See article on this page. Valentine's Day tapes: individually priced, approximately \$40-\$50 per person. Standard taps: \$6-\$12

Archives

333 Adams St. at Tilley Street, (718) 222-6543, www.meritt.com/ny/bklyn (AmEx, MC, Disc, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$17-\$32. Located in the New York Marriott Brooklyn, this spacious restaurant is elegant, with

comfortable seating. Archives offers a wide variety of seafood, pasta, poultry, beef and vegetable dishes for every taste. Some entrees by Executive Chef Walter Plender include fettuccine pasta with grilled chicken and pan-roasted halibut with sautéed spinach and sweet potato fries. Other indulgences at Archives include the Saturday evening "Seafood Extravaganza" and Sunday Champagne brunch.

Cafe Steinhof

422 Seventh Ave. at 14th Street, (718) 369-7776 (AmEx, MC, Visa) Entrees: \$9-\$13

Cafe Steinhof, named after a famous park in Vienna, has a European feel — a German "bar garden" with a hint of British pub. Due to its cultural roots and the taste of owner Paul Goevert, the restaurant serves spaetzle (small dumplings), schnitzel (meat that's been dipped in eggs, breaded and fried) and sauerbraten (beef that's been marinated for several days and then roasted). Cafe Steinhof

offers five beers on tap and 10 bottled beers from Austria, Germany, the Czech Republic and Britain, as well as wine.

Chez Oskar

211 DeKalb Ave. at Adelphi Street, (718) 852-6250 (Vias, MC, AmEx) Average entree: \$8-\$20

Chez Oskar offers some of the best French bistro fare — with hints of the Caribbean in Brooklyn. And what goes better with delicious French staples than a bottle of wine from an affordable list? Whether you choose the seared or the steak frites, the four-leaf chocolate cake is a perfect ending. Brunch is served Saturdays and Sundays from 11 am to 4:30 pm. Sidewalk cafe seats available on season.

Cocotte

327 Fifth Ave. at Fourth Street, (718) 632-6640 (MC, Visa)

See article on this page. Valentine's Day prix fixe: \$65. Entrees: \$8-\$22.

Continued on page GO 4...

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BOOKS

Rated G

Tonya Lewis Lee will read from and sign copies of her new children's book "Please Baby Please" (Simon and Schuster, \$16.95) on Feb. 8 at noon at Brownstone Books (409 Lewis Ave. between MacDonough and Decatur streets in Bedford-Stuyvesant). Lee co-authored the book with her husband, filmmaker Spike Lee, about the surprises that came with raising their own toddlers.

"Please Baby Please" is illustrated by Kadir Nelson, who collaborated with actor-narrator Will Smith on "Just the Two of Us." For more information about the book signing, call (718) 953-7328.

SINGLES

Water lovers

Animal courtship explained over cocktails at Aquarium

By Beverley Wang
The Brooklyn Papers

Dating in Brooklyn is too often a neurotic dodge ball game of personal ads, bar hopping, e-mail and phone tag whose inscrutable, often fruitless rules seem a universe apart from the natural instincts and pragmatic sense of our fellow beings.

Sensing the need for a new dating ritual, the New York Aquarium, already home to thousands of specimens of marine life, is turning its attention to human coupling with a first-ever Valentine's weekend singles event, "Sex in the Sea," set to take place Saturday, Feb. 15 at 7 pm.

The aquarium, at West Eighth Street and Surf Avenue in Coney Island, will host an evening of wine, cheese and mingling for singles over 21. Aquarium educational staff will be on hand to explain the courtship and mating rituals of various species in a series of informal guided tours through the exhibits.

Somewhere between the wine and the walrus habitat — macho male walrus keep harems proportional to the volumes of their bass bellows — education curator Mervyl Kafka, who came up with the idea for the event, hopes guests will spark a relationship of their own.

Although she's hoping participants will have a night of enlightenment mixed with sexual chemistry, Kafka doesn't expect them to take a page from the Nassau grouper, a Caribbean fish that swings both ways to guarantee the survival of the species.

"Because these fish are hermaphrodites, if two males meet, no problem. One becomes a female," said Kafka, noting that the reaction works the other way when two females hook up. "In the ocean world everything is really very different. There are a tremendous variety of strategies for courtship and mating and having a baby."

Kafka cited the sea horse as another example. A female sea horse, said Kafka, "puts eggs in the male's pouch. The male literally almost becomes pregnant and [he] will carry the eggs" through to labor.

We call them Mr. Mom," she said. Very enlightened, these sea horses, but it is not likely humans will claim the same feat anytime soon. The most humanistic courtship model probably comes from the penguins, which — divorce statistics be damned — "usually mate for life," according to the aquarium's senior teacher, Bob Cummings. Like feisty Brooklynites, Cummings said, a pair of penguins in a committed relationship "will actually fight for nesting space," going so far as to "poke each other," to make sure they get their choice.

But Kafka is quick to emphasize that meeting, not mating is the goal of "Sex in the Sea."

"There's enough people in the world," she said. "I don't want to exceed the breeding capacity of humans, but what I would like to do is increase the meeting capacity, that's the thing."

"Sex in the Sea," said Kafka, is the first aquarium event targeted specifically toward single adults. This was just the next element in developing social, educational events that will make use of the facility at night, she said.

Fran Hackett, associate manager of communications at the New York Aquarium, hopes for a turnout of about 50 guests at "Sex in the Sea."

"We hope that it's successful," said Hackett, who is single. "I may even go," she said, adding, "Even if I'm not [single], I'd just go to watch."

Proceeds from "Sex in the Sea" ticket sales go to school programs organized by the aquarium's education department.

At last count, just one man had signed up. Unless one of the women knows the secrets of the Nassau grouper, he may be one very lucky lad.

"Sex in the Sea" will take place at the New York Aquarium, West Eighth Street at Surf Avenue in Coney Island, on Feb. 15, 7-9 pm. Admission is \$23 for members, \$25 for non-members. For reservations, call (718) 265-3448.

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Saffron veal chop with fontina and prosciutto in natural jus with forest mushrooms
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Still hungry

Alan Harding looks for new mouths to feed in Brooklyn

By Zoe Slinger
For The Brooklyn Papers

Speaking with restaurateur Alan Harding about his new ventures is like taking the pulse of the changing neighborhoods he serves, and the economy that drives those changes. In an interview with GO Brooklyn, he illustrated the mix of chef, entrepreneur, style-maker and family man that makes up his personality.

Harding is a founding father of Smith Street's restaurant row. He gained recognition in 1997, as co-owner of Patois, and last summer he brought up dirt-cheap hotdogs, burgers and beer at the campy, backyard-like Gowanus Yacht Club. Harding is currently developing two new projects, both on Union Street. Schnack, an American diner, is set to open in March on Hook on March 1. The other, at Union and Smith streets, has yet to be named.

"Have you heard the story about the mouse who ate the same cheese every day?" he asked. "He gets very comfortable eating the cheese and he gets very fat. And then all of a sudden the cheese runs out, and he doesn't want to move, to go look for other cheese, so he starves."

Harding has taken this dark entrepreneurial tale to heart, creating a new explanation of his recent sale of Uncle Pho, the restaurant he opened in 1999.

"Instead of just standing there, waiting for there to be no cheese left, when starving, we decided to sell while there's a big chunk of cheese, and what we're doing right now is moving on to look for newer cheese."

The characters in this story are men, not mice: Harding and his partner, Jim Mammari. The cheese, in this case, is found among the still relatively low rents on Smith Street. It's accessibility to some of Brooklyn's most cuisine-savvy residential neighborhoods, and its proximity to the Carroll Street and Bergen Street F train stops.

When Harding and Mammari opened Patois, the cozy bistro at 255 Smith, it was an instant "Eureka!" for Brooklyn's

commuting professionals would rather dine well in a comfortable environment close to home. And if the cassoulet cost several bucks less thanks to Brooklyn rents, then hip, hungry Manhattanites would make the reverse commute.

Other Smith Street restaurants proliferated. In 1999, Harding and Mammari added a trendy, Asian-inflected eatery to the scene with Uncle Pho. The times and the place were such that style went a very long way, and the idea appealed to other would-be restaurateurs as much as it did diners.

By last summer, when he spoke about his down-market move to hotdogs and \$1 Palat Blue Ribbons, Harding wasn't feeling flattered by imitators.

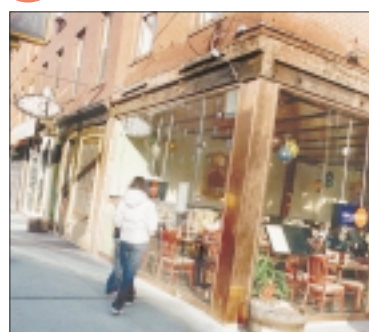
"There are five restaurants on the block using Asian ingredients," he pointed out, "so what's so special about my place? That? It's not any more."

After 9-11, diners were no longer packing the space that occupied 261 and 263 Smith. With typical practicality and flexibility, Harding scaled the restaurant back to 263 Smith, re-conceiving the space next door as a tiki fantasy called the Zombie Hut.

The downsized Uncle Pho was holding its own, and was not for sale last December, when Mammari ran into his friend Rakesh Agarwal at the bank. Agarwal, owner of 14 Baluchi's Indian restaurants in Manhattan and Queens, told Mammari he wanted to purchase a corner restaurant on Smith Street. Mammari went straight from the bank to Harding.

The partners decided they could part with the place — for the right price. After some haggling, they managed to get a little high, perhaps out of love for pad Thai? Perhaps, but that didn't phase Agarwal, who gladly tendered his initial request and opened his 15th Baluchi's on Jan. 25.

Instead of sitting around like fat mice, Harding and Mammari scampered off to new ventures. Harding is about to unveil a new menu for Schnack, which promises to tempt with recession-proof offerings like beer, milkshakes, burgers and postcard sandwiches. Across the



New neighbor: Baluchi's Indian restaurant replaces Alan Harding's Uncle Pho on the corner of Smith and DeGraw streets. Harding will open Schnack, on Union between Columbia and Hicks streets, on March 1 and the Gowanus Yacht Club will reopen on Memorial Day on Smith and President streets.

The Brooklyn Papers / Greg Margio

Brooklyn-Queens Expressway from Carroll Gardens, at 122 Union Street between Columbia and Hicks streets, Schnack will have the challenge of fitting in a space that has changed faces frequently, appearing as a bakery the first time you drive by, then a Caribbean restaurant on your next trek to Red Hook.

Meanwhile, back on Smith, the space currently known as the "Union Street project" will be owned by Angela Gerardo and managed by her partner, Jim Mammari's Yacht Club partner, James Gerardo. (The Gerardos own Bagels on the Park, which shares its outside wall with the Yacht Club.) Currently a vintage clothing and furniture shop, the spot housed a German beer hall in the late 19th century. The corner isn't landmarked, but "fortunately for the neighborhood," as Harding put it, he and Mammari were able to get it as though it were, complete with light fixtures circa 1870 and stained glass. Harding has been commissioned to design the space, concept and menu of Gerardo's "project."

This "project" sits spatially and ideologically between Patois, which is still going strong, and the Gowanus Yacht Club, which will still welcome its warm weather revelry on Memorial Day. While the folks supping at Patois may be simultaneously paying a babysitter, and the merry tipplers at the Gowanus Yacht

Club are mainly childless, the "Union Street project" will offer "value-priced" meals (no extra above \$15) in an environment that Harding hopes to see "lacked with kids."

In addition to lunch and dinner, the restaurant will serve ice cream from the warmer window during the warmer months. This gelateria concept promises to fill a need heretofore left by ceding ice cream trucks. No matter how the restaurant's American menu is received by diners, kids will bring their parents here as surely as hot days will bring drops of chocolate ice cream onto their shirts.

Designing the restaurant is essentially a commission for Harding, and it remains to be seen how involved he will be once it opens. Will it prove to be a big cheese for its owner?

"I have no idea," Harding says. "Whenever we do a renovation it is as though we come up with a good idea, and we try to get a lot more, a long lease, and a nice store, but I have no idea who's going to come in. It's always the roll of the dice."

Judging from his track record, his intimate knowledge of the past, present and future of Smith Street, and his keenly practical ability to provide people with a place where they want to spend money, the odds are in Harding's favor.

Food writer Zoe Slinger is a Brooklyn native.

WHERE TO GO

compiled by
Susan Rosenthal

THURS. FEB 6

FILM: St. Francis College presents "My Big Fat Greek Wedding." Noon and 7 pm. 180 Rembrandt St. (718) 489-5272. Free.

GARDEN WORKSHOP: Horticultural Society of New York welcomes kids and adults to a talk about trees. Learn how to take care of trees and plants and a seed to begin a tree of your own. Space provided. 3 to 4:30 pm. Brooklyn Public Library, 431 Smith Ave. (718) 782-5188.

FILM: HEARING: MTA forum on proposed fare and toll increases and subway station booth closings. 4 pm. Kilgord Auditorium, New York City College, 300 Jay St. (212) 678-7483.

RECEPTION: St. Francis College presents "Cuba," an exhibit of photographs by Rick Miller. Reception 5:30 to 7:30 pm. 180 Rembrandt St. (718) 489-5272. Free.

PEACE VIGIL: Listening, bring your poster, or help hand out other information. Flatbush and Seventh avenues. 5:30 to 7 pm. (718) 768-3002.

MEDITATION: Science of Spirituality workshop. 6 to 8 pm. Brooklyn Friends Meeting House, 110 Schenckmont St. Registration information: (917) 426-5340. Free.

FILM SALON: Brooklyn Youth Film Makers begins fourth annual event with a salon: "Culture Ignorance." Not Just Black and White. Featuring script analysis, talk about careers in film industry, youth media and more. \$5 to 6:30 pm. Solie Lee Screening Room, Long Island University, corner of Flatbush and Delafield avenues. (718) 852-9342.

LOW BAR: presents playwright Adam Rapp. 7 pm. 61 Washington St. (718) 222-1100. Free.

MEETING: Park Slope Civic Council. 7 pm. New York Methodist Hospital, room 4ABC, Carington Pavilion, Sixth Street and Seventh Avenue. (718) 624-2083.

BARNES AND NOBLE: Daryl Smith, author of "More Like Wrestling." 7:30 pm. 267 Seventh Ave. (718) 632-0066. Free.

BARGE MUSIC: chamber works by Schubert, Reger and Beethoven. 8 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

BARNES BAR: Rachelle Garner plays acoustic and sings. No cover. 9 pm. 36 Ninth St. (718) 965-9177.

RED ROOM LOUNGE: presents saxophonist Andy Parsons. \$5 cover. 9 and 10:30 pm. 464 Court St. (718) 875-1981.

BAM: presents "Twelfth Night." 7:30 pm. See Sat.

FRI. FEB 7

WILDLIFE SERIES: Prospect Park Zoo introduces, ages 2 to 3, to a program. Call for fee. 10:30 to 11:30 am. (718) 399-7359.

PARK NESTINGS: Prospect Park Alliance hosts its weekly program of storytelling, music and crafts for kids ages 3 to 5. 2 to 3 pm. Audubon Center, Prospect Park. (718) 287-3400. Free.

MOVIE NIGHT: Plymouth Church presents movie "Moulin Rouge." Dinner precedes movie. 6:30 pm. 75 Hicks St. Call for ticket information. (718) 624-4743.

SABSEEN DRINK: Park Slope Jewish Center offers a pot luck dinner and class on David and Solomon. \$12. \$10 members. Registration necessary. 6:30 pm. Eighth Avenue and 14th Street. (718) 768-1453.

READING: The Brooklyn Authors' series presents Dolores Brandon, reading from her memoir

"In the Shadow of Madness." 7 pm. Refreshments served. The Montclair Club, 25 Eighth Ave. (718) 680-2000. Free.

BARGE MUSIC: chamber music program of works by Schubert, Reger and Beethoven. 8 pm. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

FORECAST MUSIC: concert features works by composers David Schwartz, Cal Ze and Giancarlo Vukano. \$5. 7:30 pm. Galapagos Art Space, 70 North Smith St. (718) 782-5188.

BARNES BAR: Balkan Night with Shekue. No cover. 9 pm. 376 N. 7th St. (718) 965-9177.

BAM: presents "Twelfth Night." 7:30 pm. See Sat.

HEIGHTS PLAYERS: "Come Blow Your Horn." 8 pm. See Sat.

SPRING CLASSES: Soul the Hip Hop dancing offers dance, yoga, theater, creative writing, ballet and more. Call. 748 Union St. (718) 857-5158.

SAT. FEB 8

OUTDOORS AND TOURS
BROOKLYN: learn elements of bird watching. Noon to 1:30 pm. Brooklyn Heights. \$10. One drink minimum. 294 9th Ave. (718) 632-8897.

MODA CAPE: DJ "Shake Well" spins soul, funk, latin and more. 9 pm. One drink minimum. 294 9th Ave. (718) 632-8897.

COMEDY: Brooklyn Brew-Ha-Ha with MC Eddie Petrone. \$5 minimum and one drink minimum. 9 pm. East End Ensemble, 273 7th St. (718) 624-8878.

EASTERN MUSIC: Guitarist Sal Catala performs. No cover. 9 pm. Library Heights. 748 Union St. (718) 284-8050.

BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE: "My Life is a Telethon." Teen spot opens with a live hip-hop soundtrack and commercial interruptions. (Anyone over 18

must bring a teen for admittance.) \$5. 10 pm. Also, singing workshop. All ages welcome. \$15. 2 to 4 pm. Advance registration necessary. 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 626-2014.

CHILDREN:
GARDEN TALK: Brooklyn Botanic Garden invites kids to story time in its Resource Center. Stories feature famous trees. Children ages 5 and older are invited. Registration required. 11 am to noon. 1000 Washington Ave. (718) 625-7272. Free.

BOOK TALK: Brownstone Books hosts Tonya Lewis and David Lee, reading from their children's book "Pleasantville." 4:00 Lewis Ave. (718) 573-5897. Free.

WYCKOFF MUSEUM: Kids to learn about African lives on Brooklyn's Dutch Farms. Noon to 4 pm. Pieter Claesen Wyckoff House, 5816 Clemen Road. (718) 629-5400. Free.

PUPPETWORKS: "The Prince and the Magic Flute." \$6, \$7 adults. \$18 and \$30. 338 South Ave. (718) 965-3391.

BROOKLYN CHILDREN'S MUSEUM: Dr. Daniel Hsueh Williams, a pioneer in open heart surgery, hosts a hands-on anatomy workshop. Kids are invited to use microscopes to investigate heart tissue. \$4 admission. Free for members. 1 to 4 pm. 145 Brooklyn Ave. (718) 735-4000.

CHILDREN'S HOUR: Brooklyn Public Library, 431 Smith Ave. presents "African and African-American Folktales," with Julie Pasquale. Appropriate for ages 6 to 10. 1:30 pm. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 232-1000. Free.

WORKSHOP: Families first take a workshop with Marilyn

community College Performing Arts Center presents Covenant Dance Theater's "Old New, True." 8 pm. Hagan Japanese American soldiers. \$5. 7 pm. 2001 Oriental Blvd. (718) 891-6199.

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents Donmar Warehouse's "Twelfth Night." \$75, \$55, \$30, \$25. \$30. 7:30 pm. Harvey Theater. 681 Fulton St. (718) 636-4111.

BARGE MUSIC: chamber music program of works by Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms. 8 pm. Dvorak. \$35. 7:30 pm. Fulton St. (718) 624-2083.

CONCERT: Forecast Music celebrates its first anniversary with a concert of new works. \$5. 7:30 pm. Galapagos Art Space, 70 North Smith St. (718) 399-2161.

HEIGHTS PLAYERS: presents Neil Simon's comedy "Come Blow Your Horn." \$10, \$8 seniors and children. 8 pm. 25 Willow Place. (718) 237-2752.

PLAY: "The Volunteer," a new play by Pauline Simmons. \$10. 8 pm. Theater for the New City, 155 First Ave., Manhattan. (212) 254-1109.

MODA CAPE: DJ "Shake Well" spins soul, funk, latin and more. 9 pm. One drink minimum. 294 9th Ave. (718) 632-8897.

COMEDY: Brooklyn Brew-Ha-Ha with MC Eddie Petrone. \$5 minimum and one drink minimum. 9 pm. East End Ensemble, 273 7th St. (718) 624-8878.

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WYCKOFF MUSEUM: Kids to learn about

True labor of love

Couple opens new Charlie Pineapple Theatre Co.

By Paulanne Simmons
for The Brooklyn Papers

Mark and Sarah VanDerBeets have known each other ever since they met in junior college more than 10 years ago. Since that time, they've married, moved from California to Williamsburg and are expecting their first child in March. But one thing has stayed the same — their desire to start a theater together.

This December, the couple's dream came true when they opened the Charlie Pineapple Theatre at 208 North Eighth St. in Williamsburg, in a completely renovated warehouse just a few blocks from where they live.

The VanDerBeets had been looking for a space for some time and were just about to give up when Sarah said, "Let's walk down one last street."

They turned down North Eighth Street and saw in a window a small handwritten sign that said, "For Rent, 2,000 Square Feet."

After negotiating a long-term lease with owner Fred Moehring, the couple began turning the old, dusty warehouse into a modern theater. This was born the Charlie Pineapple Theatre.

The 45-seat theater owes its unusual name to a card Sarah found among her grandfather's possessions after he died. On the card was written: "Ask for Charlie Pineapple."

No one knows who Charlie Pineapple is. He certainly has no idea there's a

theater named after him, but Mark is convinced Charlie is somewhere out there.

Sarah and Mark painted walls, cleaned everything and built a permanent stage (at Sarah's insistence). They bought 10 halogen 500-watt bulbs from Home Depot and put together a lighting board using dimmer switches also bought at Home Depot.

Through the Internet, they found an Alabama theater willing to donate 45 red, plush theater seats for the cost of shipping: \$300.

The space also has a cafe area in the back that Mark says is perfect for performers and displaying works of art.

"We used money we'd saved and credit cards, and we worked non-stop for three and a half weeks," says Mark.

The VanDerBeets had to work so quickly because they wanted to mount their first production just weeks after finding the space.

Charlie Pineapple's debut production was Lyle Kessler's "Orphans," which ran from Dec. 12 through Jan. 18. Mark said he chose the play about two brothers, one of whom is mentally disabled, because he had already appeared in a San Francisco production of it.

Mark, an actor, and Sarah, a dancer, have also established the Charlie Pineapple Theatre Company, which will be in residence at the theater. They intend to eventually produce up to five plays a year from both established and emerging playwrights, as well as fea-



Co-artistic director Mark VanDerBeets inside the new Charlie Pineapple Theatre at 208 North Eighth St. in Williamsburg. (At left) VanDerBeets as Phillip and Maurice Richard as Harold, in a scene from the company's first production, Lyle Kessler's "Orphans." The Brooklyn Papers / Greg Margo



ture music and dance. The theater's next show will be Sam Shepard's "True West," another play about two brothers, this time one who is a writer and the other a drifter. It will run Feb. 27 through March 22. "It's a great play. It has a lot of power behind it. It's a play that sweeps the audience away," Mark said.

THEATER

"True West" will run Feb. 27-March 22, Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m., at the Charlie Pineapple Theatre, 208 North Eighth St. on the corner of Driggs Avenue. Tickets are \$9, \$7 for students and seniors. For reservations, call (718) 907-0577.

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LIST YOUR EVENT...

To list your event in **Where to GO**, please give us as much notice as possible. Send your listing by mail: GO Brooklyn, The Brooklyn Papers, 26 Court St., Ste. 506, Brooklyn, NY 11242; or by fax: (718) 634-9278. Listings are free and printed on a space available basis. We regret we cannot take listings after the phone.

MUSIC: Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music presents a program of works by Mozart, Zwilich and Ravel. \$15, \$5 students. 3 p.m. Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, Lafayette Avenue and South Oxford Street. (718) 855-3053.

BARGEMUSIC: chamber music program of works by Mozart, Schumann, Tchaikovsky and Dvorak. \$35. 4 p.m. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-2083.

LUCK BAR: presents Masculine Feminine, The State Age and Station Wagon with DJ Josh Gabriel. No cover. 8 p.m. 258 Grand St. (718) 599-1000.

HEIGHTS PLAYERS: "Come Blow Your Horn." 2 p.m. See Sat.

CHILDREN: AQUARIUM: presents "Hiding in the Sea" program, which explains how eels, crabs and other animals conceal themselves. Kids ages 2 to 3 invited. \$20. \$10 members (includes parking). 11 am to noon. New York Aquarium, West Eighth and Surf Avenue. (718) 665-FISH.

GARDEN TALK: Brooklyn Botanic Garden invites kids to talk "Desert Plant Explorations." 1 to 3 p.m. 100 Washington Ave. (718) 623-7272.

GROUNDHOG SERIES: Brooklyn Arts Exchange hosts a family-friendly program. Today: Flying Bridge Community Arts performs "The Butterfly Maiden." Play explores the metamorphoses of the human spirit. \$10, \$8 low-income. 2 p.m. 421 Fifth Ave. Call: (718) 852-0018.

SUN, FEB 9

OUTDOORS AND TOURS: BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN. Guided tour at 1 p.m. 1000 Washington Ave. (718) 623-7200. Free.

PERFORMANCES

CBCE: Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts presents Vietnamese artist Dang Thai Sun. \$30. 2 p.m. Walt Whitman Hall, Brooklyn College, one block from the intersection of Nostrand and Flatbush avenues. (718) 951-4500.

Wormel-Idaka, performance artist, actor, director and choreographer. 2 to 4 p.m. 250 Baltic St. Reservations necessary. (718) 237-1862.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART: Kids are invited to "Treasure Hunt," an opera by regina mezzo Scott Joplin. Story portrays African-Americans of the south during the Reconstruction era. \$4, free for children 12 and under and museum members. 4 p.m. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5000.

SLEEP IN THE DEEP: New York Aquarium hosts a sleep-over adventure. Kids 9 to 12 are invited with one adult. \$145, \$150 members. 7 pm to 10 am Sunday. West Eighth Street and Surf Avenue. (718) 265-FISH.

KIDS OUTBACK: Brooklyn Arts Exchange evening of original dance, theater, music and more. \$8, \$5 low income. 7 pm. 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 852-0018.

OTHER

MEDITATION: Science of Spirituality hosts a workshop. 11 am to 1:30 p.m. Brooklyn French Meeting House, 110 Schermerhorn St. Registration necessary. (718) 428-6340. Free.

BIMAH SKILLS: Park Slope Jewish Center offers a talk on the skills necessary when called up to the bimah for an honor. Following morning service. Eighth Avenue and 14th Street. (718) 768-1453.

SENIOR MEETING: AARP Ovington Chapter Guest speaker is Assistant District Attorney Elizabeth Foss. 1 p.m. Bay Ridge Center for Older Adults, 6735 Fourth Ave. (718) 748-0650. Free.

LIBRARY EVENT: Brooklyn Public Library, Central branch, presents a series "Brooklyn

Writers for Brooklyn Readers." Today: author Martha Soukate reads from her new book "The Call of Rome." 2 p.m. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100. Free.

SINGING WORKSHOP: Brooklyn Arts Exchange presents "Sing Songs from Around the World." Songs from Eastern Europe, Africa, New Zealand, Russia and England. \$15. 2 to 4 p.m. 421 Fifth Ave. (718) 852-0018.

WINTER CARNAVAL: St. Ann's Church hosts an evening of food, drink, music and dancing. Costumes optional. \$20. 7 to 10 p.m. 157 Montague St. (718) 875-6960.

BLACK HISTORY: Sons and Daughters of Jamaica celebrates black history month with the talk "Have We Lived Up to the Ideals of the Rt. Hon. Marcus Garvey?" Keynote speaker is Councilman Charles Barron. \$10, \$5 children. 7 to 11 p.m. Medgar Evers College, 1450 Bedford Ave. (718) 712-5034.

JEWISH FILMS: Brooklyn Heights Jewish International Film Festival presents "Time of Favor" (2001). Hebrew with English subtitles. 8 to 10:30 p.m. 17 Berman St. (718) 802-1827. Free.

RECEPTION: Exhibit of paintings by Grace Markland. 12 to 2 p.m. 61 South Third St. (718) 384-5738. Free.

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Come & Celebrate

Valentine's Day

Friday, February 14th, 2003

At **Gage & Tollner**

Brooklyn's Famous Landmark Restaurant (est. 1879)

Special Holiday Dinner Menu
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Mozart

Amelia Piano Trio and the Fine Arts Quartet perform Mozart and more

By Kevin Filipski
for The Brooklyn Papers

The Amelia Piano Trio will span the last 200 years of music in its recital Sunday, part of the Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music's 2002-2003 season. But according to violinist Anthea Kreston, that wasn't the way the ensemble, which also includes cellist Jason Duckles and pianist Jonathan Yates, planned it.

"We worked with the Brooklyn Friends to come up with a program that's most suitable for them and their audience," Kreston said from her Connecticut home.

The Feb. 9 program will consist of Mozart's Piano Trio in C Major (K. 548), Franz Joseph Haydn's Piano Trio in E-flat Major (K. 502), and a piano trio by American composer Ellen Taffa Zwilich, said Kreston.

Mozart's trio, one of his sunniest works, opens the concert.

"It's a nice, optimistic trio," she said. "Of course, you can never go wrong with a Mozart piece."

When Ravel began composing his lone piano trio, World War I was breaking out in Europe, which may account for the slow, haunting quality of its opening movement. Nevertheless, the work has maintained its reputation as one of

the most-played and beloved chamber-music pieces.

"Ravel's trio is definitely a mainstay piece in the repertoire," said Kreston. "Interestingly enough, it's one of the very first classical compositions that had an Asian influence in the second movement, 'Pantomime,' with its complex rhythmic patterns."

As for the 1987 trio by Zwilich — one of the most important American composers working today — Kreston admires it immensely.

"We wanted to play something contemporary, and it's by far one of the best contemporary trios," she said at that point.

"It often sounds like 8 hostakovich's in juxtaposing its humor with its broadly sweeping, serious moments. But for all that, it's quite compact, its three movements running a total of 16 minutes."

Zwiliich originally wrote the trio for the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio, which premiered the work. Last year, a Koch recording of Zwiliich's concertos for piano, for violin

and cello (the "Double") and for violin, cello and piano (the "Triple") showcased the K-L-R Trio's own special feeling for Zwiliich's memorable music.

In the CD's liner notes, Zwiliich writes of her fondness for writing for the instruments that make up the piano trio:

"There is the opportunity for deep exploration of the nature of the solo instruments: the

Crossings disc, "East Meets West" — which pairs them with two Chinese musicians in performances of Eastern classical music and the Ravel trio — arrives later this spring, while a Codrille disc of Paul Hindemith's complete chamber music with clarinet is scheduled for this summer.

For her part, Kreston can't wait to return to Fort Greene's Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church for this concert. "It's a beautiful place to play," she said, "and it's so open and warm-sounding."

The Fine Arts Quartet has already won kudos for its recordings of the Mozart quintets on the Lyria label, and their most recent appearance at Bargemusic was

marked by the wonderful fluidity and grace they played with in two programs that included works by Mendelssohn.

With violist extraordinary Hoffman along for the ride, these Mozart recitals could be something special.

MUSIC

The Amelia Piano Trio performs Mozart, Zwiliich and Ravel, presented by the Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music, at the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church (at the corner of Lafayette Avenue and South Oxford Street in Fort Greene) on Sunday, Feb. 9 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$15, \$12 seniors and \$5 students. For more information, visit the Web site at www.brooklynfriendsofchambermusic.org or call (718) 855-3053.

The Fine Arts Quartet and violist Toby Hoffman perform Mozart's string quintets, Feb. 13 and 14 (Quintets 1, 3 and 5) and Feb. 15 and 16 (Quintets 2, 4 and 6) at Bargemusic, anchored on the East River at Fulton Landing. Thursday, Friday and Saturday concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. Sunday concerts begin at 4 p.m. Tickets are \$35, \$25 seniors (Thursday only) and \$20 full-time students. For tickets, call (718) 624-0283. For more information, visit the Web site at www.bargemusic.org.

challenge of understanding and exploiting their character, not only as revealed in their literature, but also hiding undiscovered within them."

As for the Amelia Trio's own recordings, a Global

Mozart quintets

As much as Mozart music as we usually hear in concerts and recordings, his six string quintets — among his greatest works — aren't as frequently heard. The Fine Arts Quartet, along with violist Toby Hoffman, will help end this neglect at Bargemusic when they play all of the sublime string quintets on two programs, Feb. 13-16.

Mozart wrote his string quintets with a second violist, unlike, say, Schubert, whose sublime quintet's two cellos add more weight to the music. Mozart wrote his quintets throughout his lifetime — the first in 1773, when he was 17 years old, and the last right before he died, at the age of 35. They run the gamut from the delightful to the profound.

Tasty love

Romantic R&B crooner Freddie Jackson ("Tasty Love," "You're My Lady," "Rock Me Tonight") will perform a special Valentine's concert on Feb. 15 at 8 p.m. at Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College, on Campus Road, one block from the junction of Flatbush and Nostrand avenues. special guest Oleta Adams ("Get Here"), who has sung with many artists, including Tears for Fears. Tickets are \$35 and \$40. To order, call (718) 951-4500.

Brooklyn Public Library, Carroll Gardens branch, 396 Clinton St. (718) 853-5751. Free.

MEETING: Neighborhood Improvement Association presents guest speaker Courtland Lewis Fidler, 7 p.m. Regina Hall, 65th Street and 12th Avenue. (718) 236-5266. Free.

BARNES AND NOBLE: Discussion group's selection is "Black White and Jewish," by Rebecca Walker. Discussion starts at 7:30 p.m. 267 Seventh Ave. (718) 832-9566. Free.

HEBREW 101: Park Slope Jewish Center offers an eight-week class on beginner Hebrew. \$120, 580 members, 7:30 to 9 p.m. Call to register. Eighth Avenue and 14th Street. (718) 748-1453.

HALCYON CAFE: Mountaintop with Kai and Kohel, 6 to 9 p.m. Also, Peace Bequeath Power Hour 9 p.m. No cover. 227 Smith St. (718) 260-WAXY.

MODA CAFE: Jazz with Jon Mayes Trio. 9 p.m. One drink minimum. 294 Fifth Ave. (718) 832-8997.

BARNES AND NOBLE: Attias, Filiano and Ulrich. No cover. Call for time. 374 Ninth St. (718) 765-9177.

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents "Uncle Vanya." 7:30 p.m. See Sat.

Fri, Feb 14

Valentine's Day PARTY: Valentine's Day event at Park Slope Senior Center. 5:15 to 7:30 p.m. 463 Seventh Avenue. (718) 832-3726.

PROSPECT PARK NESTINGS: Kids 3 to 5 years are invited to a program of storytelling, music and crafts. 2 to 3 p.m. Audubon Center, Prospect Park. (718) 287-3000. Free.

WORD CANVAS: Five Spot Supper Club hosts a reading by several poets. \$10 cover. 7 p.m. to midnight. 459 Myrtle Ave. (718) 852-0027.

BARGEMUSIC: chamber music program of works by Mozart. \$35. 7:30 p.m. Fulton Ferry Landing. (718) 624-0283.

LOW BAR: playwright Brooke Bernan. 7 p.m. 81 Washington St. (718) 222-Low. Free.

WINE TASTING: A Perfect Setting hosts a session on wines of Italy

WHERE TO GO...

Continued from previous page...

Society, an evening of funk, soul and classics. 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. No cover. 209 Smith St. (718) 789-0138.

PAINTING WORKSHOP: Rose-maling Studio (Norwegian Folk Painting) hosts a lecture, 7:30 p.m. 59th Street Church, 749 59th St. All welcome. Refreshments. (718) 853-1724. Free.

LECTURE: Congregation B'nai Anshin concludes its lecture series, "Thanking You for Making Me a Woman." Talk of "Beauty is Naught." 8 p.m. 117 Remsen St. (718) 802-1527. Free.

AUDITION: Hughes Players holds try-outs for its April production of "Heaven Can Wait." 7 to 9 p.m. 26 Willow Place. (718) 237-2752.

BARNES AND NOBLE: Philadelphia film "The Performed Nightmare" (1977). 9 p.m. 376 Ninth St. (718) 965-9177. Free.

HALCYON CAFE: Underground Radio with host Vic Marnery. 6 to 9 p.m. No cover. 227 Smith St. (718) 260-WAXY.

Tues, Feb 11

MEETING: AARP. 2:30 p.m. Shore Hill Housing, 9000 Shore Road. (718) 748-9114.

GETTING ORGANIZED: Brooklyn Public Library, Business branch, hosts a business talk, "Get Unstuck, Organized, and Out of Your Own Way." 6 to 8 p.m. 238 Cadman Place West. (718) 623-7000. Free.

ENTREPRENEUR TRAINING: Brooklyn Economic Development Corporation begins its spring training program. Course meets Tuesday evenings for 15 weeks. \$165. 6:15 to 9:45 p.m. 175 Remsen St. (718) 522-4600. ext. 16.

BUSINESS TALK: Brooklyn Arts Council offers a series "Creative Aging: A Field for the 21st Century." Today's lecture: "Skills for Artists Who Work With Elders." 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. 138 South Oxford St. (718) 625-0080. Free.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS: Bay Ridge Dyker Boro High School Secondary Responders offers a talk on how families can cope with disaster and create a family disaster plan. 7 p.m. Victoria Memorial Hospital. Call to register. (718) 567-1021. Free.

BARNES AND NOBLE: Author Pete Hamill reads from his new novel "Forever." 7:30 p.m. 267 Seventh Ave. (718) 522-9666. Free.

BARNES AND NOBLE: Denene Milner and Nick Chiles read from their novel "In Love and

War." 7 p.m. 106 Court St. (718) 246-4996. Free.

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents "Uncle Vanya." 7:30 p.m. 81 Washington St. (718) 222-Low. Free.

THEATER: "The Laramie Project." 7 p.m. See Mon, Feb. 10.

Weds, Feb 12

AFRICAN DIASPORA: Long Island University celebrates with movement and poetry workshop by poet Cheryl Boyce Taylor. Other events throughout the day. 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Locations around campus, Flatbush Avenue Extension at DeKalb Avenue. (718) 488-1051. Free.

LINCOLN VISITS BROOKLYN: Friends of Historic New Utrecht presents its annual Lincoln's Birthday Celebration. Lincoln is performed by New Utrecht Church, where he is greeted by members of the 14th Brooklyn Regiment Co., and gives his thoughts on the Civil War and recites "The Gettysburg Address." 5:30 a.m. elementary and intermediate schools and 12:30 p.m. (high schools). Evening program at 7 p.m. 1531 84th St. (718) 256-7173.

OPEN HOUSE: Adeline Adams invites members of the community to learn about his new programs for fall of 2003. Noon to 2 p.m. 8515 Ridge Blvd. (718) 238-3398.

ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE: presents Julian Tuwain in an exploration of African heritage in voice and movement. 12:30 p.m. 245 Clinton Ave. (718) 783-6374. Free.

VIDEO SERIES: St. Ann and the Holy Trinity presents "Romeo and Juliet." 7 p.m. Refectory, 157 Montague St. (718) 255-9960. Free.

MEETING: Bay Ridge AARP. Narrows chapter hosts a talk, 2 p.m. Curly of Angels, 337 74th St. (718) 788-7372. Free.

WORKSHOP: Brooklyn Arts Exchange hosts a talk, "Higher Education Opportunities in Theater and Dance." 6 to 8 p.m. 421 Fifth Ave. Call to register. (718) 832-0018. Free.

PUBLIC HEARING: New York City Districting Commission holds a meeting. 6 to 9 p.m. Medgar Evers College, 1650 Bedford Ave. (718) 487-7170.

MEETING: General Board meeting of Community Board 6. 6:30 p.m. St. Peter St. Paul Church, 100 St. Peter St. (718) 643-0027.

MEDITATION WORKSHOP: Learn sahaja yoga. 6:30 to 7:45 p.m.

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PARENT

Twins don't mean 'double trouble'

Q: "My son and daughter-in-law are expecting twins. This is exciting, but a diapered duo will be a handful. Any advice would be appreciated." — a grandmother

A: Parents, make a "Please do not disturb" sign and don't be afraid to use it. On the flip side, write "Help Wanted!"

Learn to say no before you've had it with visitors — including relatives — and yes in those early weeks when you need someone to cook dinner, run errands and help care for your twins.

A good place to turn for support and information is the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, which has about 475 local clubs.

"Regular moms can give you advice about health, clothes, how to burp," one group member says.

"But only another mother of multiples can tell you how to get them both to sleep at the same time, how to manage giving baths when you're home alone or how to get the kids into the stroller in the middle of a parking lot."

Some mothers have been able to attend a twins club meeting during pregnancy, meet other mothers, find out who the support people are in the club and keep their phone numbers handy if they need help.

To find a local twins club, call the national organization toll-free at (877) 540-2200, or check out its Web site at www.nomotc.org.

"The twins' clubs really saved my life," one mother recalls. "My breast-feeding buddies helped me survive those first few months. People with

Parent-to-Parent



By Betsy Flagler

older multiples have always been there, night or day, to calm me down when life got turned upside down."

Something else to do before the babies arrive: Try to tour the neonatal intensive care unit to prepare yourselves if your twins need this special care.

One of the best gifts after the arrival of twins: meals. One father of twins says a "dinner wagon," where a church group delivered hot meals each night to his family for a month, was a blessing.

Other tips from parents:

- Establish a list of priorities. At the top, put the needs of your babies, then your own well-being. To take the best possible care of your children, it's vital to take care of yourself and stay in touch with other moms who support you. Rest whenever you can. Dust can wait.

• To do more than just get by day to day, establish a workable routine. With twins in the early months, spontaneity isn't doable.

• Use a chart to show at a glance who has been cared for and at what time, including any medications.

• Start a family journal. Even hasty one- or two-line entries will help jar your memory later on.

• Get a double stroller as soon as possible. Two car seats will be too heavy to carry.

• Hand-me-down clothes will help solve the problem of "twice as much laundry and half the time to do it."

• Pick names with different first letters so that you can use their initials to identify their shoes and other personal belongings.

• Buy in bulk at a wholesale club and use a drive-through pharmacy. When shopping, use a funny pack and keep your car keys on a stretchy bracelet designed for keys.

• The parents of twins have so many little extras to consider, such as whether pictures will be taken individually at the hospital.

• Don't buy two of everything until you know you'll need two. Let your twins be your buying guide.

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For more information call Beth Garbow, Program Director

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